

**Honorable Fred Durhal III**  
**Council Member – District 7**



**Chair, Budget Finance and Audit**  
**Vice Chair, Planning and Economic Development**

## **Detroit City Council**

May 8, 2023

Members of the Michigan House of Representatives:

I am writing to express my support for the bipartisan efforts by State Representatives Angela Witwer, Tyrone Carter, and Patrick Outman to reform Michigan's aggregate mining permitting system. This reform aims to optimize the use of taxpayer dollars in infrastructure repairs, and I strongly encourage you to support their initiatives.

Over the years, our state's infrastructure has suffered greatly, particularly our roads, bridges, and other vital structures. Reports and studies have consistently shown that Michigan's infrastructure is among the poorest in the nation. This is due in large part to the many years of public investment that has not been commensurate with the level of disrepair we face.

Recognizing this, Governor Gretchen Whitmer has made a laudable commitment to "Fix the Damn Roads," dedicating a sizable \$3.5 billion to the cause. Despite the Governor's significant financial pledge, our current aggregate mining permitting system has proven to be a major stumbling block. It is a regrettable reality that over \$700 million of the \$3.5 billion earmarked for infrastructure will be wasted on excessive transportation costs, thus reducing the funds available for actual repairs.

The plan presented by Representatives Witwer, Carter, and Outman aims to address this glaring issue. Their proposal to shift the aggregate mining permitting process to the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) represents a strategic and cost-effective solution. By following the best practices of other extractive industries already under EGLE's supervision, we can significantly reduce the cost of aggregate materials and expedite their delivery, thereby saving time and taxpayer dollars.

Under the current system, local governments often face immense political pressure to deny sand and gravel mining permit requests, resulting in delays and escalating costs. By placing the permitting process under the purview of EGLE, we can alleviate this issue, ensuring a more consistent and efficient supply of aggregates for our infrastructure projects.

Beyond the direct financial benefits, this plan offers numerous environmental and societal advantages. With aggregate mining locations closer to construction projects, trucks would travel shorter distances, significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions. This aligns with our broader goals of environmental conservation and sustainability. With its expertise and stringent environmental protection requirements, the EGLE will also ensure that all mining activities are conducted responsibly, preserving the health of our natural resources.

The bipartisan legislative package of HB 4526, HB 4527, and HB 4528 has garnered widespread support from the Build it Michigan Strong coalition, which includes leading unions such as the Operating

Coleman A. Young Municipal Center 2 Woodward Avenue Suite 1340 Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Phone (313) 224-2151 Fax (313) 224-2155

Engineers, Teamsters, and Laborers, as well as business groups like the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. This broad-based coalition recognizes that these reforms are vital to not only save billions of dollars but also create jobs and stimulate economic growth in our skilled trades labor force.

I stand shoulder to shoulder with Representatives Witwer, Carter, and Outman, and the Build it Michigan Strong coalition in their unwavering commitment to reforming the aggregate supply chain, combating inflationary costs, and accelerating infrastructure repair.

I strongly encourage that you do too. Together, we can ensure that Michigan's infrastructure is repaired and built to last, supporting our communities, economy, and environment for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Durhal III", written over a horizontal line.

Councilmember Fred Durhal III  
Detroit City Council - District 7